



The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) offers several child nutrition programs that provide healthy food to children to help fight hunger and obesity by providing reimbursement for providing healthy meals and snacks to children.

In Wisconsin, the nutrition programs administered by the Department of Public Instruction include:

- National School Lunch Program, including the Afterschool Snack Program
- School Breakfast Program
- Child and Adult Care Food Program
- Summer Food Service Program
- Special Milk Program

Why should your school or district participate in the USDA Child Nutrition Programs?

1. Students are Ready to Learn

Schools benefit from having healthy children in the classroom. Research shows that students who have healthy diets, eat breakfast, and get regular physical activity are more likely to perform better academically by helping students with greater concentration, better attendance, and better classroom behavior (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention 2014, under "Know the Evidence").

2. Federal Financial Reimbursement

USDA Child Nutrition Program participation entitles your school(s) to reimbursement for meals and snacks that meet the meal pattern, according to the student's eligibility. This assistance helps the financial viability of your meal program.

Reimbursement rates for school year (SY) 2019-20

USDA Child Nutrition Program	Student is eligible for free	Student is eligible for reduced price	Student is not eligible for free or reduced price
National School Lunch Program*	\$3.50	\$3.10	\$.39
School Breakfast Program**	\$2.20	\$1.90	\$0.31
Afterschool Snack Program	\$0.94	\$0.47	\$0.08
Special Milk Program	\$0.2150 per milk	\$0.2150 per milk	

* Additional State lunch aid was \$0.0499 in school year 2018-19.

** Additional State breakfast aid was \$.07999 in school year 2018-19.

In addition to cash reimbursements, schools are entitled by law to receive USDA Foods, called "entitlement" foods, at a value of \$0.2375 for each meal served in school year 2019-20. Schools can also get "bonus" USDA Foods as they are available from surplus agricultural stocks.

3. Students and Parents Request Healthy Foods

Students and parents are requesting that schools offer meals that are healthy, taste good, and varied. Wisconsin schools are offering breakfast smoothies, walking tacos, and teriyaki chicken bowls. Innovative schools are using awarded USDA funding from equipment grants for stir fry stations and garden bars. Schools are using Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program funding to introduce students to a variety of produce they would not have the opportunity to try otherwise, like persimmons, pomegranates, and kohlrabi. Similarly, schools are using school gardens to support their school meal programs, as well as expand their curriculum to include hands on gardening activities. To see exciting ideas from around the state, check out our Wisconsin School Meals Rock! webpages at <https://dpi.wi.gov/wisconsin-school-meals-rock>.

4. Kids Learn Healthy Habits for a Lifetime

The nation faces an obesity epidemic. Nearly 1 in 5 school age children are at risk for preventable diseases like diabetes and heart disease due to obesity (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, "Childhood Obesity Facts"). Left unaddressed, health experts tell us that our current generation of children may have a shorter lifespan than their parents. Since children may consume as many as half their meals in schools, school meals play a critical role in helping children learn how to lead healthy lifestyles. Food offered in the lunch line should reflect what students are learning in the classroom.

In 2010 the school meal patterns were updated resulting in children eating more fruits and vegetables. A Harvard study concluded that, under the updated standards, children are now eating 16 percent more vegetables and 23 percent more fruit at lunch (Harvard School of Public Health 2014).

5. Technical Support and Training

The School Nutrition Team at the Department of Public Instruction provides the training and technical support you need to manage successful, sustainable USDA Child Nutrition Programs. Visit our webpage at dpi.wi.gov/nutrition for more information. Additional resources are on the USDA website at: fns.usda.gov/school-meals/tools-schools.

Program Participation Requirements include:

1. A copy of your IRS 501(c)(3) status letter to document nonprofit status;
2. Be formally recognized by the Department of Public Instruction as a school;
3. Have a DUNS number, issued by the Federal government;
4. Have a Federal Employer Identification Number (FEIN) number;
5. Complete new program training.

Contact Us

If you are interested in learning more about the USDA Child Nutrition Programs, please contact me no later than June 30, 2020, to begin in school year 2020-21 at 608-266-2416 or by email at karrie.isaacson@dpi.wi.gov.

Sincerely,

Karrie Isaacson, RDN, CD
Assistant Director – School Nutrition Team

References

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. 2014. *Health and Academic Achievement*. Accessed February 8, 2019. https://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/health_and_academics/pdf/health-academic-achievement.pdf
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. "Childhood Obesity Facts". Accessed February 8, 2019. <https://www.cdc.gov/obesity/data/childhood.html>
- Harvard School of Public Health. 2014, "New school meal standards significantly increase fruit, vegetable consumption". <https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/news/press-releases/school-meal-standards-increase-fruit-and-vegetable-consumption/>